

ASEAN - USA

17th ASEAN-US Dialogue

Joint Press Statement

Bangkok, 30 January 2004

1. The Seventeenth ASEAN-US Dialogue was held on 30 January 2004 in Bangkok. Delegates from the governments of the ten ASEAN Member Countries and the United States and from the ASEAN Secretariat attended the Meeting.
2. In his welcoming remarks, H.E. Tej Bunnag, Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Thailand, stated that with uncertainties in the international environment, ASEAN and the United States continued to be even more relevant for each other's foreign policy in the Asia Pacific region. He further stated that with ASEAN moving towards an ASEAN Security Community, ASEAN Economic Community and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community, there is further scope for the enhancement of cooperation and partnership between ASEAN and the US.
3. In his opening remarks, H.E. James A. Kelly, US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, highlighted the positive development and mutual benefits of US-ASEAN relations during the almost 27 years of the Dialogue. He underscored US-ASEAN common interests in expanding their flourishing economic relations, as well as in addressing transnational problems such as terrorism, trafficking in persons and in narcotics and HIV-AIDS. He emphasized the US commitment to strengthening further US-ASEAN relations and looked forward to a discussion of concrete ways in which both sides can broaden and deepen their relationship.
4. The Meeting welcomed the ASEAN-US Work Plan on Counter-Terrorism which provides a firm basis for closer cooperation between the two sides in combatting international terrorism, and stressed that this Work Plan should complement the ASEAN's Work Programme to Implement the ASEAN Plan of Action to Combat Transnational Crime. The US supported the ongoing efforts of ASEAN Member Countries to prevent, suppress and eradicate acts of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, committed wherever, whenever and by whomsoever, and welcomed ASEAN's report on progress made in this regard at the 4th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC) and the 1st AMMTC+3 (China, Japan and the Republic of Korea) in Bangkok in January 2004.
5. The Meeting stressed the importance of maintaining people-to-people contacts and increased flow of travel between US and ASEAN citizens.
6. The Meeting underscored the importance of cooperation with the US on maritime security as a substantial step towards the drive of ASEAN to regionally address terrorism in a holistic, integrated and comprehensive manner as advocated in the Declaration of ASEAN Concord II (Bali Concord II). The Meeting acknowledged the growing cooperation in this field between the US and individual

ASEAN Member Countries bilaterally. The Meeting also welcomed increasing counter-terrorism cooperation in multilateral fora such as the United Nations, the ARF and APEC.

7. The US briefed the Meeting on the latest developments in Iraq. The US emphasized the progress made towards an independent, democratic, peaceful, prosperous and unified Iraq, and underscored the importance of the 30 June 2004 transition of governing authority. The Meeting welcomed the UN Secretary-General's recent decision to dispatch a UN team to Iraq to support this transition. ASEAN reaffirmed that the United Nations must continue to play a central role in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Iraq in accordance with the aspirations of its people and with the UN's responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

8. The Meeting discussed the current diplomatic initiatives to end violence and restart negotiations in the Middle East in accordance with the Quartet's Road Map to achieve the vision of a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders.

9. The Meeting recognized that the issue of the Korean Peninsula is vital to peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region and, in this connection, underscored the importance of a nuclear weapons free Korean Peninsula. The Meeting underlined the importance of a peaceful, comprehensive solution to the issue by diplomatic means. The Meeting expressed its hope that the next round of six-party talks will be held at an early date and will lead to a denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

10. The Meeting welcomed the agreement of ASEAN Leaders to establish the ASEAN Security Community. The ASEAN Security Community is envisaged to bring ASEAN's political and security cooperation to a higher plane to ensure that countries in the region live at peace with one another and with the world at large in a just, democratic and harmonious environment. The ASEAN Security Community is open and outward looking in respect of actively engaging ASEAN's friends and Dialogue Partners to promote peace and stability in the region.

11. The Meeting reaffirmed the important contribution of the ARF to regional security and hoped that the work of the ARF will continue to move forward in a dynamic manner. The Meeting reiterated the importance of strengthening the ARF. The Meeting also reaffirmed that the ARF, through the Chair and its "Friends", could play a facilitating role in reducing tensions in the region.

12. The Meeting welcomed the follow-up activities to implement the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, including the ASEAN-China Symposium on the Implementation of the Declaration in March 2004 in Indonesia.

13. The Meeting concurred that transnational issues including, inter alia, organized crime, arms smuggling, human trafficking, maritime piracy and infectious disease are of great concern and that closer partnership and mutual support are essential in tackling these issues. The Meeting highlighted the importance of providing technical support for countries in the region to help build their capacities to address these issues effectively.

14. The Meeting underscored the need for enhanced international cooperation to solve the problem of illicit drugs which continues to pose a threat to human security. The Meeting agreed to enhance cooperation between the two sides to address this problem from both the supply and demand sides, taking into account ASEAN's goal to make the region free from drugs by 2015. In this regard, the Meeting welcomed US support for the implementation of the ASEAN China Cooperative Operations in Response to Dangerous Drugs (ACCORD) Plan of Action.

15. The Meeting emphasized the importance of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and the ASEAN Work Programme on HIV/AIDS II, 2002-2005 to the fight against HIV/AIDS at the global and regional levels respectively. The Meeting noted that the 15th International Conference on AIDS, to be held in Bangkok in July 2004, should help mobilize wider support for HIV/AIDS prevention and alleviation. ASEAN welcomed the US announcement in January 2003 to contribute one billion US dollars to the Global Fund, commended the efforts of the US to support ASEAN Member Countries in their fight to stem the tide of HIV/AIDS and looked forward to benefiting further from the Fund.

16. The Meeting reaffirmed the commitment of ASEAN and the US to the protection of the environment while pursuing economic development, and agreed to strengthen ASEAN-US cooperation in environmental matters. The Meeting noted the entry into force of the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution on 25 November 2003. The Meeting stressed the need for effective follow-up action to the results of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg.

17. The Meeting welcomed the timely convening of the Ministerial Meeting on the Current Poultry Disease Situation held in Bangkok on 28 January 2004 and its outcome including concrete measures agreed upon as a contribution to regional and international efforts in decisively and effectively containing this outbreak.

18. The Meeting discussed the results of the WTO Ministerial Conference in Cancun and concurred that flexibility and political will are needed to re-energize multilateral negotiations towards the successful conclusion of the Doha Development Agenda. The Meeting agreed on the necessity of focusing on the core topics of agriculture, goods, and services in order to achieve substantial progress in 2004. In addressing these topics, the Meeting acknowledged the need to incorporate special and differential treatment, recognizing that developing countries face varying circumstances, additional challenges from global competition, and particularly sensitive adjustment problems. The Meeting reiterated the importance of free flow of goods and fair trade.

19. The Meeting also exchanged views on the successful outcome of the recent APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in Bangkok and agreed to strengthen cooperation to implement the decisions of the meeting. ASEAN briefed the Meeting on recent developments within regional and sub-regional cooperation frameworks such as ASEAN-Mekong Basin Development Cooperation (AMBDC), Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-

EAGA), Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT), Bangladesh-India-Myanmar-Sri Lanka-Thailand Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC), Ayeyawady - Chao Phraya - Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS) and the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD). The Meeting agreed to strengthen ASEAN-US cooperation within sub-regional, regional as well as multilateral frameworks and through the enhanced involvement of the private sector.

20. The Meeting exchanged views on the economic outlook in ASEAN and the US and noted that the world economy will likely experience stronger growth in 2004 than in 2003. The Meeting welcomed the robust economic recovery in ASEAN and the strengthened growth of the US economy which should help stimulate further economic growth in the region.

21. The Meeting was encouraged by the significant decision reached at the 9th ASEAN Summit in Bali last October to establish an ASEAN Economic Community as a single market and production base with free flow of goods, services, investment and skilled labour as well as freer flow of capital by 2020. The Meeting also welcomed ASEAN's agreement to accelerate the integration of eleven priority sectors from 2004 onwards which should provide opportunities for the expansion of trade and investment between ASEAN and the US. The Meeting highlighted the continued vibrancy in the ASEAN-US trade and investment relationship. The Meeting welcomed the progress on the Enterprise for ASEAN Initiative (EAI) as a signal of the importance that the US places on enhancing ties with ASEAN. The Meeting acknowledged that the ultimate goal of the EAI is to create a network of bilateral FTAs that will link ASEAN and the US. The Meeting recognized the ongoing cooperation on trade issues including IPR, trade facilitation and standards and underscored ASEAN and US resolve to make further progress on the ASEAN-US trade and investment work programme. ASEAN expressed the hope that both sides would work closely for the conclusion of an ASEAN-US Trade and Investment Framework Agreement.

22. The Meeting discussed ways and means to further enhance the dialogue relations, developing a partnership covering a broad range of issues of mutual interest. The Meeting acknowledged the importance of the ASEAN Cooperation Plan (ACP) in deepening and expanding the scope of cooperation between ASEAN and the US. The Meeting noted that the establishment of a new USAID regional mission in Bangkok would facilitate this process. The Meeting expressed its appreciation to the US for hosting the 2nd ASEAN-US Informal Coordinating Mechanism (ICM) and is confident that ICM will be an effective mechanism to push forward the implementation of projects under the ACP. The Meeting agreed to develop a work programme to implement further the ACP. The Meeting was informed that ASEAN is finalizing its guiding principles for development cooperation with its Dialogue Partners.

23. The Meeting welcomed the interaction with representatives of the ASEAN and US private sectors at the ASEAN-US Dialogue during which these representatives put forward their recommendations on how ASEAN and the US can better promote trade and investment in the region.

24. The Meeting agreed to hold the ASEAN-US Dialogue on an annual basis. In this regard, the Meeting agreed to convene the next ASEAN-US Dialogue in Washington D.C. by the end of 2004.

25. The Meeting was held in the spirit of cooperation and cordiality.